

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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/101 W

-----050939 091429Z /72

R 091033Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1957
INFO AMEMBASSY KABAH
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 2417

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, AF, NP
SUBJECT: GON REACTION TO EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

1. AT SUGGESTION OF JOINT SECRETARY JAGDISH RANA (WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT) AMBASSADOR CALLED MAY 8 ON FOREIGN MINISTER ARYAL TO BRIEF HIM ON DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN FROM PERSPECTIVE OF ONE WHO, NOT BY CHOICE, HAD BEEN ON SCENE DURING RECENT COUP. AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED EVENTS AS THEY HAD OCCURRED IN KABUL AND GAVE ARYAL SOME COMMENTS--NOTING THAT THEY WERE PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS, THAT WE HAD NO ANALYSIS FROM WASHINGTON AS YET--ON WHERE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE GOING AND SOME OF UNCERTAINTIES RE FUTURE.

2. ARYAL LISTENED ATTENTIVELY THROUGHOUT, BUT SAID LITTLE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT AMBASSADOR'S REPORTS OF ATMOSPHERE AFTER COUP--PURGES, ELIMINATION OF MOHAMMEDZAI FAMILY MEMBERS, FEAR ON PART OF MIDDLE CLASS AND INTELLECTUAL GROUPS--WAS
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WHAT ARYAL AND RANA EXPECTED TO HEAR. LIKEWISE THEY EXPRESSED NO DISAGREEMENT WITH AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS THAT ONE OF KEY QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE WAS WHETHER AFGHANISTAN WOULD BECOME YET ANOTHER SOVIET SATELLITE, OR WHETHER IT COULD, WHILE FOLLOWING LEFTIST COURSE, STILL REMAIN DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE. ARYAL'S FIRST QUESTION WAS WHY HAD INDIA RECOGNIZED NEW REGIME SO QUICKLY. AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD NO INSIDE INFORMATION ON SUBJECT BUT NOTED

THAT INDIANS HAD SAID THAT ACTION WAS REFLECTION OF LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. THEY WERE ALSO SAYING THEY FELT IT IMPORTANT TO OFFER DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WHO HAD JUMPED IN WITH EARLY RECOGNITION. ARYAL

ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN IMPACT OF AFGHAN EVENTS ON PAKISTAN AND SPECIFICALLY ON BHUTTO. AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD SEEN SOME SPECULATION THAT EVENTS INCREASED LIKELIHOOD OF BHUTTO'S EXECUTION, BUT ARYAL NOTED COUNTER ARGUMENT THAT DESIRE TO AVOID INTERNAL STRIFE AT SENSITIVE TIME COULD WORK TO BHUTTO'S ADVANTAGE.

3. ON ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OF NEW REGIME, AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED U.S. POLICY ON THIS ISSUE IN GENERAL AND NOTED THAT AS OF MAY 6 WE HAD INDICATED THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD CONTINUE. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S QUERY, ARYAL CONFIRMED THAT GON HAD NOT YET TAKEN DECISION TO RECOGNIZE, BUT THAT DIPLOMATIC NOTE HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY NEPALESE EMBASSY IN DELHI FORMALLY REQUESTING SUCH ACTION. ARYAL SAID MATTER WAS BEING STUDIED AND INDICATED THAT, WHILE THERE WAS CERTAINLY NO ENTHUSIASM HERE FOR NEW REGIME, AFGHANISTAN WAS A LANDLOCKED MEMBER OF NON-ALIGNED LIKE NEPAL AND RECOGNITION SHOULD BE FORTHCOMING SHORTLY.

4. COMMENT: PUBLICLY GON HAS BEEN VERY RESERVED ON EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. HOWEVER, EMBASSY SOURCES REPORT THAT BOTH PALACE AND RANKING FAMILIES HAVE BEEN DEEPLY DISTURBED BY COUP. ATTACKS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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KABUL ON RANKING FAMILIES, PURGES, ETC. QUITE CLEARLY HAD

SENSITIVE NERVES HERE. THERE IS ALSO ACUTE AWARENESS THAT EVERY COUNTRY IN SOUTH ASIA EXCEPT NEPAL HAS HAD CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IN LAST TWO YEARS. QUESTION AT RECENT LOCAL FUNCTION BY NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMAT TO MEMBER OF RULING FAMILY TO EFFECT: "AFTER AFGHANISTAN COUP HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU WILL BE AROUND" MAY HAVE NOT ENHANCED NEPAL-NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS BUT IT HIGHLIGHTS SENSE OF CONCERN OVER AND POSSIBLE VULNERABILITY TO HISTORICAL PROCESSES IN REGION AS THEY MAY AFFECT NEPAL.

5. LIKEWISE INDIAN REACTION CLEARLY DISTURBING TO GON. IF GON PREPARED GIVE INSTANT BLESSING TO TARAKI REGIME IN KABUL, WHAT MIGHT IT DO IF TROUBLES AROSE IN KATHMANDU? FINALLY, WHILE OF SOMEWHAT LESS IMMEDIATE AND DIRECT CONCERN, GON CLEARLY SHARES CONCERN OF OTHERS AS TO WHAT AFGHAN COUP WILL MEAN FOR REGION, INCLUDING PERHAPS NEPAL. GON CLEARLY REALIZES THERE IS LITTLE IT CAN DO TO INFLUENCE EVENTS STEMMING FROM COUP, BUT IT WILL BE WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS WITH CARE AND HOPING SOMEONE CAN CONTAIN SITUATION IF NOT TURN CLOCK BACK.

6. SUBSEQUENT TO DRAFTING ABOVE RADIO NEPAL ANNOUNCED MAY 9,

1978, THAT GON HAS RECOGNIZED THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN
AFGHANISTAN.
HECK

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